# ROUTINE ACCESS POLICY
## Communications Nova Scotia

October, 2004

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

This Routine Access Policy for Communications Nova Scotia is designed to provide persons with an opportunity to obtain certain categories of records without having to submit a *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP) application. It shall be administered in accordance with the following principles:

### a) Personal Privacy

The policy shall be applied in a manner which will be considerate and protective of the personal privacy of individuals. Records subject to this policy shall be considered for release and severing in a manner consistent with the FOIPOP Act.

### b) Timeliness

Communications Nova Scotia will respond to requests made under the Routine Access Policy in a reasonable and timely fashion.

### c) Cost Recovery

Fees for the reproduction and provision of records may be charged where authorized by policies, regulations, or statutes.

### d)Transparency

This policy shall be made readily available to the public.

### e) Reasonableness

This policy shall apply to requests for reasonable quantities of records.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

***Routine Access*** is the routine or automatic release, in full or in part, of certain types of administrative or operational records as a matter of course in response to a request without the need for a formal application for records under the *FOIPOP Act.*

***Active Dissemination*** is the periodic and proactive release of information or records in the absence of a request using mechanisms such as the Internet, libraries, etc.

***FOIPOP Access*** is the release of a record in response to a formal FOIPOP application made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*

***A Record*** "includes books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, mechanical or other means, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records" (clause 3(1) (k) *FOIPOP Act*).

## 3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to provide accessibility of certain records routinely without additional administrative time being required of staff to fulfil routine access requests. It is also to provide greater access for those requesting information, and reflect the spirit of openness and accountability of the FOIPOP legislation. Communications Nova Scotia currently responds to requests for information as routine access where possible. The agency already makes communications related guidelines, policies and other information available on its Web site.

## 4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff and to all records designated under this policy in accordance with the attached Schedule A.

a. This policy shall apply only to requests for reasonable quantities of records and shall not apply to a request for more than 50 pages of records in a particular category and/or time period. Repetitive requests by an individual for significant volumes of records or the separation of a request into several small requests totalling a large volume, shall not be subject to the policy. It is important to ensure that the application of the Communications Nova Scotia Routine Access Policy not unduly interfere with the day-to-day operations.
b. Requests made under routine access do not apply to information subject to exemptions under the *Freedom and Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*
c. Routine access requests apply to information created after October 23, 2003.
d. Personal information may be severed with the same criteria and in the same manner as requests made under the *FOIPOP Act.*
e. The name of the requester shall be treated with confidentiality and released to agency personnel on a need-to-know basis only.

## 5. POLICY DIRECTIVES

In order to ensure that this policy is adhered to, Communications Nova Scotia will:

- post the policy on the agency Intranet and Internet sites
- ensure that all staff are advised of the policy and the implementation date
- ensure that routine access requests are forwarded to the designated person (s)
- maintain a tracking system for compliance and auditing purposes
- revise the policy as required

## 6. POLICY GUIDELINES

Once a request for routine access to a particular record, or set of records, has been received, it shall be forwarded to the designated contact (see Schedule A for Contact Information). The request will be reviewed to determine if the records are within the routine access policy.

If the policy does not apply to the request, a response to the requester shall be provided promptly and shall indicate what other avenues may be available to obtain the information ( e.g. FOIPOP Application).

If the policy applies to the request, the records shall be provided to the applicant within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 30 days from receipt of the request.

All requests will be documented and forwarded to the FOIPOP Administrator for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

## 7. ACCOUNTABILITY

The FOIPOP Administrator is responsible for:

- the approval of this policy and the annual review and approval
- an annual evaluation of the policy

Designated contacts (see Schedule A) are responsible for administering this policy and processing requests in a timely manner in accordance with the policy directives, guidelines and procedures.

The senior management team is responsible for ensuring that employees follow the policy directives, guidelines and procedures.

Employees are responsible for following the policy directives, guidelines and procedures.

## 8. COMPLIANCE

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Communications Nova Scotia shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance of this policy.

## 9. EVALUATION

The Routine Access Policy shall be evaluated on an annual basis by the FOIPOP Administrator, in consultation with senior management.

The program will be measured by the following:

- the number of requests received
- the number of requests in which information was provided under routine access
- the number of requests which were referred to FOIPOP
- monitoring feedback from those using the program

## 10. REFERENCES

Records containing personal information as defined in the *FOIPOP Act* will not be disclosed by Communications Nova Scotia outside of the Act, unless the personal information has been severed Disclosure of personal information must be in accordance with Section 27 of the FOIPOP Act.

## 11. INQUIRIES

Routine access requests should be forwarded to the designated contacts as listed in Schedule A.

## 12. APPENDICES

Schedule A - List of Records for Possible Routine Access and Designated Contacts

October 2004

**Communications Nova Scotia**
**Routine Access Policy**
**Records For Possible Routine Access**
**Schedule A**

| Records for Possible Routine Access | Contact |
|---|---|
| **Contracts -**<br>Contracts under the N.S. Government Public Tenders Policy (may be subject to severing in accordance with FOIPOP legislation). | Carla Burns<br>FOIPOP Administrator<br>902-424-2876<br>Fax: 902-425-3026<br>E-mail: burnsca@gov.ns.ca |
| Public/Private Co-publishing agreements between government and the publishing sector (may be subject to severing under Section 5 (2A) of the FOIPOP Act) | Dan Sargeant<br>Director of Publication Services<br>902-424-2974<br>Fax: 902-424-0515<br>E-mail: sargeand@gov.ns.ca |
| **Communications Related Policies and Guidelines** | |
| N.S. Government Communications Policies and Procedures Manual | Carla Burns<br>FOIPOP Administrator<br>Coordinator, Communication Support<br>902-424-2876<br>Fax: 902-425-3026<br>E-mail: burnsca@gov.ns.ca |

| Records for Possible Routine Access | Contact |
|---|---|
| **Creative/Publication Services**<br>cost to design and/or produce a specific publication, brochure or other related communications product which is in the public domain (within a two-year period after public release) | Andrew Barss<br>A/Director of Creative Services<br>902-424-2977<br>Fax: 424-0620<br>E-mail: barssa@gov.ns.ca<br><br>Dan Sargeant<br>Director of Publication Services<br>902-424-2974<br>Fax: 902-424-0515<br>E-mail: sargeand@gov.ns.ca |
| **Finance Related**<br>Individual Expense Claims for a three month period within the current fiscal year and for a maximum of three individuals in one department at any one time<br><br>Cost of special or specific events (i.e., conferences, luncheon, workshops, training, etc., within three months of the event having taken place)<br><br>Detailed expenditure reports, by category, (e.g. salaries, travel, etc.) for a maximum of three per fiscal year<br><br>Final audits by the Corporate Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Finance | Jeanette States<br>Manager of Administration<br>902-424-5243<br>Fax: 902-425-3026<br>E-mail: statesjm@gov.ns.ca |

| Records for Possible Routine Access | Contact |
|---|---|
| **Human Resource Related**<br><br>Personal service contracts of individuals not appointed pursuant to Civil Service Act<br><br>Secondment agreements, both within government and outside government<br>(subject to severing in accordance with the FOIPOP Act)<br><br>Organizational Charts (without names)<br><br>Generic job descriptions and pay scale<br><br>Hiring Process<br># of applicants for position<br><br>#of persons interviewed<br><br>identity of selection panel (to persons interviewed only)<br><br>Name of successful candidate, once offer has been accepted | Paul Edwards<br>Manager of Human Resources<br>Corporate Service Unit<br>902-424-4586<br>Fax: 902-424-7676<br>E-mail: edwardpd@gov.ns.ca<br>P.O. Box 187, Halifax, B3J 2N3 |